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SHEET METAL

MAGAZINE OF ALTERNATIVE HARD ROCK AND HEAVY METAL

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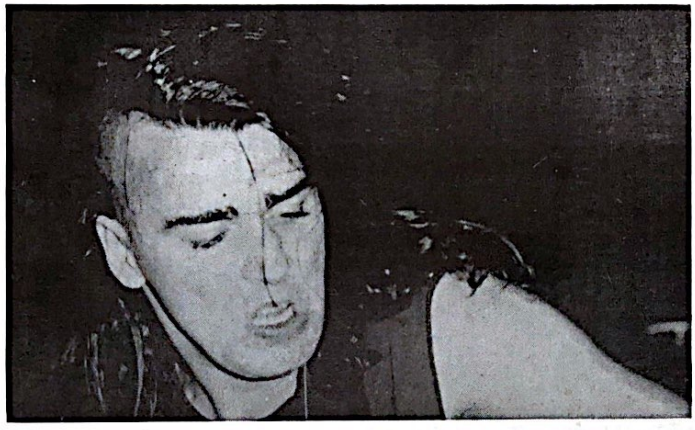

VOIVOD

PAUL GILBERT

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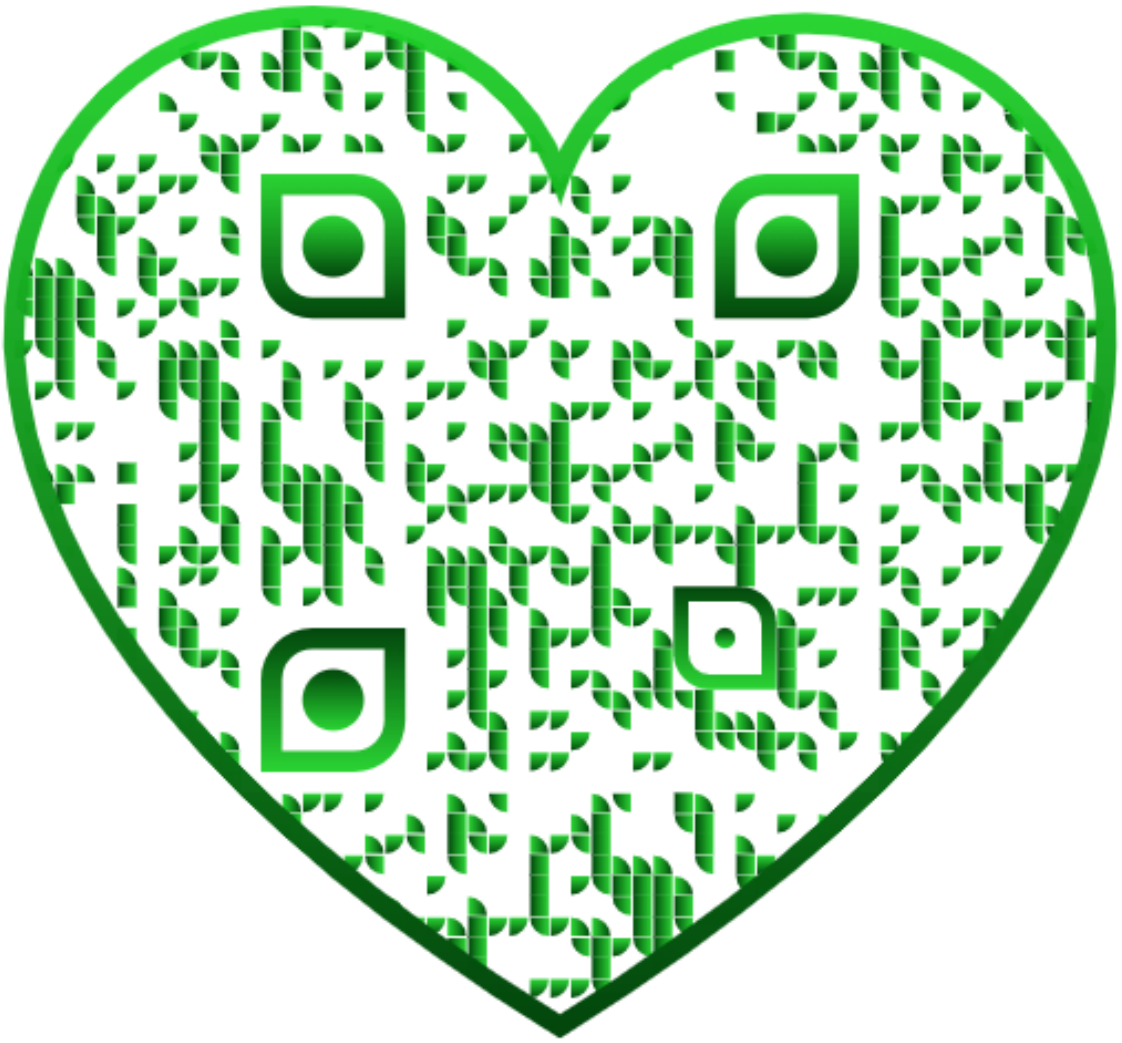

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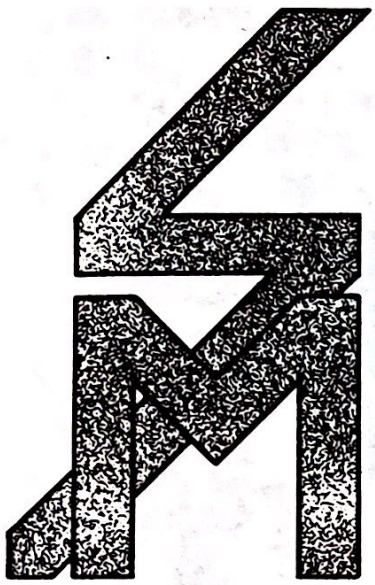

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SHEET METAL —

Welcome to the third issue of Sheet Metal Magazine. I appreciate those of you that have taken the time to drop me a line with your thoughts on the mag. Sheet Metal is perpetually growing and I forsee a full color cover coming within the next few issues, so this is just the beginning. Thank you for all your support.

I encourage anyone who thinks they might have something to contribute to get in touch with me. Whether it be writing, photos, or even art, Sheet Metal can always use additions to it's staff. Please pass the word.

Subscriptions are still available. $8.00 gets you the next four issues of Sheet Metal delivered to your doorstep (or mailbox). Please specify which issue you'd like your subscription to start with. Also notice that Sheet Metal T-shirts and stickers are available (see ad in this issue).

A note to all bands that have submitted a demo for review in "Nubiles": Your tape will get reviewed. The response has been overwhelming and I'm doing the best I can to fit as many as possible into each issue, but it may take a few months. I'm not stiffing you!

Take care, and remember, Heaviness Is Next To Godliness!

-Jake Wisely/Editor

MnEeTwAsL

Ludichrist underwent a number of line-up changes, leaving Tommy Christ and Glenn Cummings as the only original members. New second guitar, bass and drums have been added and their second LP, "Power Trip", should be out soon...Mechanic Records initial signings include thrashers Stone and Violence. These incredible releases are on deck as well as something new from Sweet!...King Diamond guitarist Michael Moon has left the band due to friction between himself and the group. Bassist Timi Hansen has left for family reasons. Hansen has played with King since the days of Mercyful Fate. Both musicians have been replaced and expect a lengthy article next issue...Anthrax is to release a 90 minute live video of a Hammersmith show, while Joey Belladonna is to appear in a new B-rated horror flick called "A Hazing In Hell"...Roadracer Records announces the formation of Hawker Records, their new hardcore affiliate. First signings include Pagan Babies and Token Entry...Newly established SPV USA, a division of the German based SPV has two new signings in Hitt Man and Napalm. Expect LP's this summer. Already we've seen SPV USA release eight records stateside, including Destruction's "Mad Butcher", slabs from Assassin and Satan, as well as two from Sodom...End of the Rainbow mailorder is looking for demos to sell through their catalog and store. Send samples c/o George Bacon, PO Box 1676, New Canaan, CT. 06840. EOTR has an expansive catalog of metal, including imports. Send a buck to obtain it...Wycked Records is compiling a series of albums entitled "Guitar Mania". Potential heroes should send high quality recordings with no more than two songs to "Guitar Mania", c/o Wycked Records, PO Box 67-d-05, Century City, CA. 90067...Znowhite is now less founding member and vocalist Nicole Lee as well as bassist Alex Overa. Lee's replacement is Debbie Gunn, former Sentinel Beast, and coming in on drums is fusion enthusiast John Slattery while Scott Shafer has switched from drums to bass.

METALLIZINES

By Jake Wisely

Concrete Foundations is the title for "The Industry's First Metal Newsletter!", but I imagine that it is available to the general metal public. Interviews, editorials, charts, tour dates, and more make CF an informative read. Write for price info (1133 Broadway, Suite 735, New York, NY. 10010). **Gray Matter** is a very well-done offset mag with the usual interviews, photos, reviews, and news concentrating on speed metal, laid out in an attractive, graphic style. Send $3.00 ($4.00 outside North America) to Chris Orloski (5319 Peterson Ct., Flower Mound, TX. 75028). **Loud** is a Phoenix magazine that keeps getting slicker. They're well into full color and cover all realms of metal, from commercial to thrash, in a very personal fashion. Recommended for those of you into gloss and color. $1.95 from Joe Lopez (P.O. Box 56425, Phoenix, AZ. 85079). **Metal America** is another slick mag covering a wide variety of metal. There's less color, but sufficient amounts of good writing and metallic info, as well as a good black and white live photo section. $3.00 from Metal America (901 Meridan-Waterbury Turnpike, Southington, CT. 06479). **Metal Meltdown** is a zine for those of you that only mosh. Nothing but thrash and death metal, enough to satisfy any sinnful craving. This rag is certainly less slick, but that's the point. $1.25 ($2.50 outside North America) to Jeff Vanderclute (P.O. Box 824, Severna Park, MD. 21146). **The Wild Rag** is a zine that slips for simple graphics, but when it comes to providing loads of in-depth articles and interviews on a wide range of metal, The Wild Rag dishes it out. $3.00 (2207 Whittier Blvd., Montebello, CA. 90640).

INDESTRUCTIBLE NOISE COMMAND

By Jake Wisely

Indestructable Noise Command are currently one of my favorite up and coming speed metal outfits . Before I heard their Giant Records debut LP, "Razorback", I was expecting nothing out of the ordinary, but what I got was eight tunes of gripping technical thrash.

I guess many-a-folk have staked INC's sound right next to Metallica's, and certainly the influence is there, but bassist/vocalist Dennis Gergely would like to differ. "We play thrash, but I think there's kind of a classical edge. It's like a classical background. Eric (Barath, guitar), he does most of the writing. He's listened to Yngwie and stuff like that and kind of applied it to thrash. Whereas I think Metallica is more blues based."

If you agree of not, INC further separates itself via production. "Razorback" was a self-produced effort and I can't imagine more appealing work for a band in their situation. I was caught initially by Dennis' always audible bass. In fact, it is used and was mixed much as a guitar would be, as a lead instrument. As the record kept spinning, I noticed the drums and guitar were done in similar fashion, creating a very layered, transparent effect. "We wanted it real heavy and clean too," said Dennis, "y'know crunchy. We didn't have a lot of money to work with so we produced it ourselves, but we wanted everything to be heard."

After three years, two demos, and a long-term contract offer from Combat, INC signed with the newly established Giant Records. Dennis speaks on the Combat offer: "It really wasn't what we were looking for . . . We all really didn't want to get tied down. Hopefully a major label or somethin' might pick us up eventually, but it was too much of a risk, I think, to be tied down for that long of a time." Besides, Combat has a lot of acts to look after, whereas Giant could put a lot of effort into their first bands. "It's not like they can lose track of any of us . . . They're doin' more than they can. They're really stickin' their necks out . . . We're all pretty happy."

So far, "Razorback" seems to be doing well in the sales arena, and with a new licensing deal through SPV in Europe, it's sure to break high marks. Another LP should be due in the fall of '88, but in the mean time we can expect to see INC touring the states extensively. "I'm confident that everyone will like the show," said Dennis, and if the LP is any proof of that, you're in for a treat.

"I hope everybody can not think about who we sound like, and think about who we don't. Just get the original aspects out of the album and just enjoy it. Just forget about Metallica."

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photo by Bonnie Graham

VoiVod

By Steve Erickson

Classification of music often has more to do with marketing than with the music itself. I'm not saying that such classification is useless, but it seems that too many bands stick strictly to what falls within the borders of their little ghetto. What does any of this have to do with Voi Vod? Voi Vod are one of the few bands that take the power & energy of hardcore and metal, while avoiding their cliches. Their music, while based on speed metal, delves into many directions and takes inspiration from many different genres. Voi Vod's guitarist, Piggy, is one of the few guitarists I've heard who can play at extremely fast speeds without sounding like a blur. They're more musical and intricate than most modern metal or hardcore, but they never sacrifice their songs for mindless showing off. Voi Vod have the inventiveness of (and a guitar sound similar to) Die Kruezen, the velocity of Motorhead or early Black Flag, and the sonic impact of Feedtime or early Killing Joke. They sound like nobody else (which I may not have made clear by mentioning five other bands). Their latest record,"Dimension Hatross"(on Noise/Epic Records), is generally slower and more melodic than the previous three were, but still of the same quality(I must mention here that I've only heard a sampler tape at writing time). This interview with singer Snake was done over the phone in March.

Sheet Metal: How do you think "Dimension Hatross" is different from your last album?

Snake: It's the normal evolution. It's still Voi Vod but it's got psychedelic touches. It's getting weirder.

SM: How popular are Voi Vod in Canada?

S: We opened a door there. The metal scene's getting bigger and bigger. In Canada there's not a lot of bands. The new album is distributed by Epic in Canada and the U. S.

SM: Can you see yourselves getting as big as Metallica?

S: Yeah, we hope so. We're trying to get on the same level.

SM: What bands from Canada do you recommend?

S: Rush! In the underground scene DBC(and a few other bands' names I can't make out). Rush are the best band in Canada, which is just my taste.

SM: What is dimension hatross?

S: It's where Voi Vod go after going into space on "Killing Technology". We build a machine to take us into another dimension, which is called Hatross. It's kind of a reflection of our society. It's a concept album with eight chapters. Each song is a chapter. When each song ends there's another coming. It's not a story from the beginning to the end of the album. We try to create a story of Voi Vod's evolution. We tried to do something new and interesting. A concept album is a lot of work. We'd been thinking about it for the next album since two years ago.

SM: Judging from your lyrics, you guys are into science fiction.

S: Yeah, of course. Did you see the movie "Eraserhead"? We like "2001" and stuff like that. We are influenced by many things, even the old television series "The Outer Limits".

SM: Have any really interesting or weird experiences happened on tour?

S: There's always something new happening on tour. On the last tour, there was always something bad happening at the border. We didn't see any UFO's or anything weird like science fiction.

SM: Are you going on tour after "Dimension Hatross" comes out?

S: Probably in June or July. We've all ready planned a week with Megadeth in June. We're trying to get two weeks with Megadeth and then switch with another band, maybe Motorhead.

SM: What other bands/artists do you listen to?

S: I listen to different kinds of music . . . Motorhead. Megadeth is good, too. We also listen to industrial music, classical, old rock. . . we can listen to both classical music and hardcore.

SM: It's good that you listen to all different kinds of music.

S: A lot of people are into one kind of music and they don't want to hear anything else. I think it's good to try something new. Music expresses many kinds of feelings, so I think it's good to listen to many kinds of music.

SM: A lot of different styles you listen to show up in your music and make it more interesting.

S: Yeah, of course. You can get a lot of ideas from different kinds of music. Different kinds of chords, different kinds of beats . . . You can build your own musical concept and create something from it.

SM: What guitar effects does Piggy use?

S: He has many kinds of distortion. I don't know exactly what he's got. The only thing I know is that he's always willing to try something new. He plays many strange chords, like between tones or something like that. He's always trying to find a new way to play guitar. He experiments with many things.

SM: How would you classify Voi Vod's music?

S: I think Voi Vod is Voi Vod. Even if we call ourselves thrash or metal or whatever, we're Voi Vod. It's our original concepts of music. It's like science-fiction psych/core/metal. I don't have an objective point of view.

continued on page 28

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HADES

By Jake Wisely

photo by Bonnie Graham

Upon first hearing Hades' "Resisting Success" LP, I was blown away. They administered talented, technical instrumentation and intelligent lyrics like rarely a speed metal outfit has done. "Resisting..." is a diverse blend of metals, comprising one of my all-time favorites. God only knows what's to come on "If At First You Don't Succeed", their second LP being released by Torrid Records.

Under the same management as Rush, Hades is hitting the East Coast, but hopefully we'll see them take on the whole United States soon after.

My questions were answered by guitarist Dan Lorenzo, and hopefully you won't find his attitude condescending. Hades is an intense band and they deserve your support.

Sheet Metal: There's quite an obvious concept behind "Resisting Success", but certainly you wouldn't shun popularity or success if it came to you? You can't avoid receiving royalty checks if your albums are selling well.

Dan Lorenzo: The concept has been misconstrued. We want fame and fortune, but we want it on our own terms. Before the album came out, the major labels said we were resisting success by being too heavy.

SM: Considering the heavy political/social overtones, do you think that may scare some fans off who just want to bang their heads?

photo by Bonnie Graham

DL: Lyrics don't scare anyone. I hate Slayer's lyrics, but I've seen them seven or eight times. I love political lyrics; Alan writes mostly from personal experiences. We will not write about the same theme twice.

SM: Does Hades cater to or attract a certain type of metal fan, different from the rest?

DL: Sometimes I fear we are a critic's band, not that we're rocket scientists, but we may be too smart for our own good.

SM: Tell me all the ways that Hades is different from the average plodding speed metal outfit.

DL: We have three great musicians, a vocalist who can sing and write lyrics, wait, all bands make this statement, but compare Hades man for man against others. We know we are doing something different. We care so much about every musical passage and lyric. No filler material gets by.

SM: In the short release you sent me, you took a very different stance. Do you feel you might be snubbing the metal scene by taking this partially elitist stance?

DL: Alan wrote that, but we are above most of the noise out there. Our second album will prove that. You know how Maiden has a bass player, Slayer has a drummer, Exodus has guitar players, and Anthrax has a singer, Megadeth has a songwriter? We have it all. Our record company and manager will get pissed at me for saying that, but it's the truth. Most bands put four or five great songs on an album and then it's "filler time". Not us. Most bands have nine songs that sound the same-same tempo, same key -- BORING. I love a lot of songs by Metallica, Slayer, Exodus, Sabbath, but the only albums I listen to every song is Aerosmith, the first two Cheap Trick, early Kiss, and "Coup De Etat" by the Plasmatics. Mucky Puppy are doing something viable also.

SM: Tell me about the new album.

DL: The album is thrash, power metal, heavy metal - nine different songs, not nine different titles, but nine songs that sound different from each other.

SM: Considering the extreme technicality in Hades' music, has anyone in the band been formally trained, either in fusion or any other style that seems to have an effect on the group's sound?

DL: Ed, Tom, and Jim are too much. Extreme devotion to their instruments. I can't find any time to practice, plus I just don't have it in me, but I know I can write.

SM: What plans do you have beyond this LP, or will you just take things in stride?

DL: If we can start making a living at this, there will be a third Hades album.

SM: How were the sales on "Resisting Success"?

DL: We still work for a living. Over 10,000 in 1987 in America. No big deal.

I suggest you beware of "If At First...", because it's bound to be an incredible LP. Definitely pick it up, and as Dan put it: "Stop taping and start buying!"

CHASTAIN

By Jake Wisely

Upon hearing his work on the Chastain LP "The 7th Of Never", and his solo instrumental LP, "Instrumental Variations", I'm quite confident that David T. Chastain is the guitar hero he's been made out to be. Chastain is probably the most straight ahead speed and intensity picker of this new breed, leaving the action to his fingers rather than a load of effects. "I think the music we play is a lot heavier and lends itself more to that kind of sound", said David.

He is probably one of the busiest musicians in metal as well, if not all of rock. There certainly isn't a shortage of his material to be heard. He's released two LP's with his more commercially-minded, Cincinati-based outfit, CJSS, as well as four LP's under the group title Chastain (the most recent being "The Voice Of The Cult"), not to mention the instrumental LP, and still more to come on a solo album he's helping put out for Chastain vocalist, Leather. He's either got screwed up priorities or is an incredibly prolific and dedicated guitarist(the latter thinks me).

"Originally the band was CJSS. Mike Varney got a hold of some of the tapes and he wanted to put me together with Leather, so I wasn't gonna pass up an album, y'know, and basically it was gonna be a solo deal, so I said sure. And I still have CJSS at home and then CJSS started talking to some people, so it was like two bands had records out. The Chastain band never did really play until this past year. Then, this instrumental album is what I've been talking about doing for a long time and I just decided to go ahead and get that out of the way, although at this point in time it's the biggest selling record, so I'm gonna reconstruct my priorities."

Chastain draws influence from progressive fusion players like Allan Holdsworth and Al DiMeola, though his own sound is just barely similar, most likely due to being self-taught. "I have never picked off a lead by somebody. I didn't get Yngwie's records and learn every lick he ever played, and then be influenced by that. I think that a lot of the other people have done that. I think a lot of these people sound Yngwieish just from listening to him. I don't know a lead by anybody else. I've always played my own thing. Even when I was in cover bands and had to play other people's songs, I always played my own breaks, I never picked off their breaks. I've developed my own style. I've never had a guitar lesson in my life either. I'm totally good or bad self-taught."

Chastain, the band, is an odd and different concept in recording. Due to some geographical variations, the group is rarely all together at once. David is based out of Cincinati along with bassist for both Chastain and CJSS, Mike Skimmerhorn, while female vocalist, Leather, resides in San Fransisco. Chastain's drummer, who looks to be as busy as David himself is Ken Mary, who also plays with Alice Cooper as well as his own Epic recording act, Fifth Angel. Mary works out of Seattle. Chastain explains to us how things get done: "I record everything on my home demo, where I play everything with a drum machine. I play all guitars, bass, and vocal parts, and put that on an eight track. We transfer that to a twenty-four track machine, and we replace all those parts. Nobody in the band sees anyone else in the band other than me. The drummer is the last person that does his thing. It's built up like a project. It's not like we all go in there and cut the album. It's definitely nothing like that."

Live Chastain shows might seem out of the question, but somehow they do happen. While Ken Mary was on tour with Alice Cooper, CJSS's drummer sat in for a round of gigs. Leather typically flies in only a few days before they play, allowing for minimal rehearsal time. Regardless of the circumstances, Chastain will soon embark upon a full swing tour in support of "The Voice Of The Cult", and in top form too. David affirmed my suggestion that the sound is more spontaneous when everyone comes together for a show, considering they are not constantly practicing with eachother.

Fans might find that "The Voice Of The Cult" LP is "slightly more accessible" than other Chastain vinyl. "I figure since I did the instrumental album, which I really went off on the guitar, I don't have to go so far off on the Chastain records anymore. I've got that outlet. So this is hopefully going to feature a little bit more of Leather." Also, some major labels have been sniffing around, though I think that David prefers to have his own artistic freedom and the new accessibility isn't a result of that, merely progression.

I think we can keep expecting to see a lot of material coming from Chastain and his groups, as he's certainly not letting up. "If I only had to write and record nine or ten songs a year, I'd go crazy." So, as long as the well doesn't run dry, we'll have a sane David Chastain.

PAUL GILBERT

Since the conception of this article, both Paul Gilbert and singer Jeff Martin have left Racer X, citing the usual 'musical differences'. The article does, however, concentrate mostly on Gilbert and his guitar playing, and what he does say about the rest of the band is interesting as reference and after-thought. The Racer X live LP, "Extreme Volume", is still to be released and the band seems to have found a new guitarist in Chris Arvan, though they are still searching for Martin's replacement. Meanwhile, Gilbert has been playing with former DLR bassist Billy Sheehan. -Ed.

By Jake Wisely

These days, when so-called "guitar heroes" are popping up daily, it's hard to say who is going to make a lasting impression and who is going to get overrun by tomorrow. It would be humanly impossible to play much faster than what's happening today, so we must leave it up to style to be the deciding factor. As far as a speedy, drop-jaw lick is concerned, Racer X's Paul Gilbert will provide. So, if it's technicality you crave, beware!

Gilbert is one of the few virtuoso talents that hasn't been influenced to a large degree by the pickers; fusion guitarists such as Al DiMeola and John McLaughlin. His style is based in early metal: Nugent, Page, and Joe Perry, extending into Rhoads, Schenker, and of course Eddie Van Halen. In fact, he didn't play much beyond hammer-ons and pull-offs until the emergence of Yngwie Malmsteen. "When I heard Yngwie, I just thought, 'Wow you can pick. I get it.' So I started working on that real heavily."

Racer X have released two LP's on Shrapnel Records, the guitar label started by the talent scouting Mike Varney. Their most recent studio endeavor is entitled "Second Heat" and of course features mind boggling instrumentation (on every musicians part), though it's a step closer to commerciality than what their previous work has been. (Their Shrapnel contract is almost up and it's time to impress the majors).

Otherwise, their newest piece of vinyl, which should be out by the time you read this, is a live LP called "Extreme Volume". "We recorded it in two nights, which is a little bit tight,"said Gilbert, looking to capture a perfect show. "We just stood still as much as we could stand, which wasn't very much. After you stand still for one tune, you see the audience going nuts and you just can't take it anymore. You gotta run around."

"Extreme Volume" was recorded in January '88, at L.A.'s famed Country Club, with Rick Delena(Yngwie, Iron Maiden) handling production."We've got songs from the first and second albums, but we've also got some new tunes. We've got a tune called 'She Wants Control', which is new. We've got an instrumental called 'Scit-Scat-Wah', which was named after Fred Flintstone's comments after entering a jazz club. And we've got one more new tune called 'Set The World On Fire' ". And if that isn't enough, "Extreme Volume" has four separate solos: two guitar, one bass, and one drum. Self-indulgent? Maybe, but these dudes deserve it. Rarely is there so much talent in a single band . . .

Sheet Metal: Doesn't being considered a guitar hero leave a lot to live up to? People are buying Racer X albums just to hear you.

Paul Gilbert: Basically, I don't know if I'd play that much different without promo and albums. I practice like mad either way, so it's not something that affects me too much.

SM: So you really don't think about being considered a guitar hero?

PG: It's neat seeing the magazine stuff and recording records and things like that, but it doesn't give me extra hours in a day.

SM: Do you think the guitar hero moniker will die out with this surge of talented players, or do you think they'll just weed each other out?

PG: I think there will always be musicians who stand out, whether it be guitar players, drummers, or whatever. I think right now there's a lot of guitar stuff going on because there's a lot of cool guitar players. But, I think it really goes more towards the arranging side of it; figuring out how to take really terrifying guitar playing and put it into a better context, and make it a little more musical, and have it be as big as the Beatles.

SM: So do you think the people coming out who can play fast and technical as hell, it doesn't really mean anything if they can't write a song?

PG: I think it's real cool, but it's cooler if they can stick it in. It's to the extent that if someone can arrange and write well, the better they'll do.

SM: Do you think there's going to be a lot of overkill with these virtuoso guitar talents? You're kind of in the first wave of it all, but Mike Varney is always picking up new talents.

PG: I kind of like overkill. Still being relatively a youngster, I'm a sucker for a little too much in everything. My feeling is that there's going to be enough guitar players that there's going to be just about everything. There will probably be your overkill guys, and there will be the guys that get in the Top 40 bands and put it in once in a while.

SM: Out of the students you teach at G.I.T., how do you decide if they are a true talent or just budding cliche metal guitarists?

PG: I find that after teaching for a little over two years, the thing that seems to be kind of consistent is guys who have really good ears, who've really developed their ears a lot.

seem to really stand out as being able to accomplish what they want to accomplish. There are a lot of guys who spend a lot of time with a metronome or whatever, but it's like singing without monitors, or painting with a blindfold on. They may be able to put time into it, but if they can't really hear what they're doing; if there's a mistake they'll practice it over and over again. They won't hear it. Then there are guys who may not actually put that much time into it, but because they've trained their ear they know exactly what the status of their playing is and can really work on what's important. That really seems to be the thing that prevails.

SM: Would you say it's getting harder for a guitarist to make it big with this surge of good guitarists?

PG: I'd say in a way it's easier and in a way it's harder. It would be harder because there seems to be a lot more competition. There are definitely a lot more terrifying guitar players than there were ten years ago. But, in a way it's a lot easier because there is Mike Varney and you can be totally unknown in some strange part of the country or world and not have any record label contacts or be in a band or anything. Just send him a tape and if it's good Mike will contact you and help out a lot. I remember saying to myself once, "Geez, if it wasn't for Mike Varney, what the heck would I be doing?" I'd probably be sitting in Pennsylvania, where I grew up, thinking, "Gee, I wish my band would do more Ozzy tunes, instead of Survivor tunes."

SM: So do you think since the doors are more open now, it's gonna be easier?

PG: Yeah, definitely, I think that's what makes it a lot easier, and also being able to have more hip guitar players as influences really helps a lot. If you're six years old and you hear Yngwie and just consider it as a standard, that will effect people a lot. As opposed to hearing Ted Nugent or Jimmy Page, kind of what I grew up on.

SM: What would you say to someone who said you are all technicality and there's no real gut feeling in your playing?

PG: I'd play 'em one of my new blues licks I've been learning! Definitely I work so much on technique and learning new phrases and that sort of thing, that a lot of the time I am just thinking about it. But again, I think it goes back to your ear.

SM: Are you a very spontaneous guitarist? Live, do you improvise a lot?

PG: A whole lot. I find that I can put a lot more conviction in my playing if I improvise. With worked out solos, they sound worked out . . which is okay. A lot of times that works really well, but really to have the most conviction and authority in my playing, that usually happens with improvising; plus it's kind of fun. It's like tightrope walking, you don't know whether you're going to fall or make it to the other side.

SM: So on the upcoming live album, we can expect songs off of "Second Heat" that aren't exactly like on the album?

PG: Oh, definitely. We didn't overdub anything. All the guitars are totally live. There are a few flubs occasionally, but if you listen to them enough, they sound like hip outlicks.

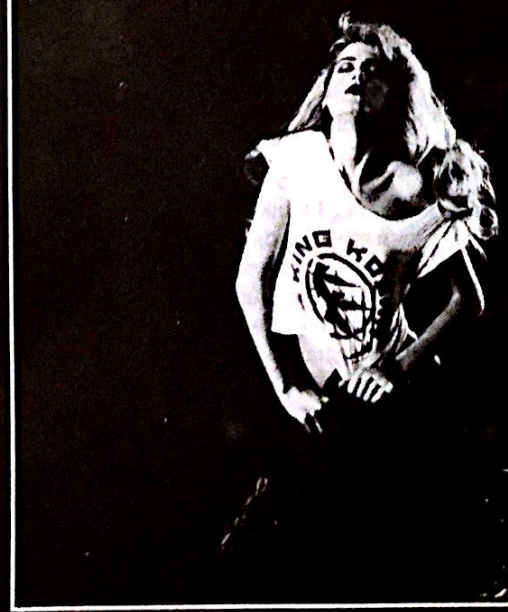
SM: What separates you from all the other guitarists?

PG: I think the best way to answer that, the obvious thing, would just be to listen, but word-wise I think one of the things that just comes naturally is playing with a lot of furiousness(to coin a word), a lot of fire. I like to hit hard. Basically it's just combining my weird sense of humor, using drills and fringe guitars and day-glo pink guitars and that sort of thing and walls of green speaker cabinets with a lot of entertainment and hard-hitting music.

continued on page 27

TASTE THE VENOM!

KING KOBRA III



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CRUMBSUCKERS

By Earl Root

To tell you the truth, I never really paid that much attention to the Crumbsuckers, consisting of five fine guys, all fine players. I have a copy of their first effort (recorded on a cheap tape from a cheap tape) and yes, I did enjoy it, but I guess I stigmatized them and lumped them in with stuff that I enjoyed more, like Agnostic Front and DRI. Not to say that I didn't like what the Suckers were and are doing, it was just an easy excuse to pass the tape over when you know the sound quality of the dub sucks the big weenie (my own fault).

Things turned out to be very laid back and relaxed and I found a group of guys who were having a good time working, playing, touring, and trying real damn hard not to grow up. Putting up with four ugly fucks with whom you grew up and have to deal with like a wife or something may sound like heaven or hell to you, but to the Crumbsuckers it's second nature, a job that's better than construction and what they really wanted anyway.

Let's go now to before the big gig at the Cabooze where we find the dudes doing what anybody does when they just get up...eat. (Guitarist Robbie Koebler is no longer in the band, but was replaced by former Carnivore guitarist Marc. -Ed.)

Sheet Metal: Your drummer is a monster. Wow, I was impressed.

Marc: He eats a lot of junk food. It fuels him for the double bass.

SM: So, you guys are obviously from the East Coast, how long have you been a band?

Gary Meskil: Actually six years, but pieces of this a lot longer.

Chris Notaro: I guess it's pretty easy to tell that we're from Long Island.

SM: Will you tell the people who may be unfamiliar with you what kind of stuff you're playing now? Is it more metal or...

CN: Well, kinda and kinda not. It's kinda like the Cro-Mags with a little more metal. Some of the stuff we are playing and some of the stuff on the album was written like five years ago, if that's any help.

SM: So, how old are you guys?

CN: Our drummer is only 18, but the rest of us average out to 22.

SM: So, how did you get your deal? Did you just shop your demo or did someone give you a break or do you know someone?

GM: We were playing a matinee show at CBGB's with Nuclear Assault and Combat was there to check them out. They ended up signing us first.

SM: How is Combat treating you? (Unanimous groans and uh-oh's). Well, I don't want to get anybody in trouble or anything. I mean, you don't have to say anything if you don't want.

GM: No, that's not it, I mean the label treats us pretty good, but I'm not totally satisfied with the distribution of the records.

SM: Are you guys making money from your records or your tour or is it your merchandising or what?

Marc: We aren't losing any money but it's the merchandising that's making us something.

SM: I know that on a tour like this, it's main function is to promote your record and that touring is not a way to make money. If you are selling records from the tour, that's the way to do it. But if your company isn't paying you for your records...

Marc: Let me put it another way, if we split up the money we make at the shows, sure, we'd be doin' pretty good. We put the money back into the band, equipment, the bus, y'know, even our profits from the merchandising. We can think of endless things to spend for the band.

SM: How does your band work together, I mean, are you like a family unit or are you just friends or is this strictly a business?

GM: The band started as just a friendship thing. If we weren't in a band, we'd all be friends. It started in high school for fun and we didn't even really take it seriously. As it happens, I'm the only original member left although I know everyone very well who is here now. Dan is one of my best friend's brothers.

CN: I want to get back to this thing about Combat. I think that we have a better deal than most bands on the label 'cause we have a three album deal, whereas a band like Possessed is stuck with them for eight or so albums. We aren't there for life unless we wanna change that. My advice to younger bands is wait for the best deal to come around. Don't jump on the first thing like you are never going to get another chance. If someone out there is offering, someone else is going to want to also. Also, try to get the shortest contract you can to leave you room to get bigger, if that's what you want. Combat had the best deal for us.

GM: We are still with Combat because now

they have about 90% different people working there than a few years ago.

SM: So how is the tour going?

CN: Really good. I mean we aren't playing the big collosiums, but where we are playing, a lot of the kids are getting there. We played in Wisconsin last night.

Marc: And only two kids showed up.

CN: No, no, that turned out great. A lot of kids came and there wasn't any fights and everyone had a great time, but we were flippin' through their reader and the ad said the Crumbsuckers are playing at the Odd Rock Cafe and this is another band who's music was banned from some radio station. I never knew that our music was banned anywhere and we certainly weren't prepared for this central American overly conservative attitude. We never ran into that in New York y'know, where they don't want to see or hear the music. I guess I can see with our first album where a couple of songs wouldn't make it for lyrical content, but with the new album we are trying to take a more positive approach. We even have some piano and acoustic guitars on the new record and I think it's going to throw some of the old fans off, but we still have a couple for them too. After the intro, it kicks in and you have the Crumbsuckers sound again.

SM: It seems to me that it took you guys a long time to get this record out. How come?

CN: There are too many reasons why this took so long. First, we went to California to record. Combat had suggested we use Randy Burns to produce since he had been doing a lot of work with them. We were looking at the new Megadeth record, "Hmmm, Randy Burns, yeah, we'll work with him." Second, when we got to California, we ran into a lot of problems and then we find out that the work on the Megadeth record wasn't his. When they resigned to Capitol, they remixed. Third, by this time we were running way over budget and by the time we finally got back, we decided to go upstate and do another remix. We worked with Genya Ravan at Dreamland Studios and, hey, we know it took a long time to get out, but we are finally happy with it.

SM: Well, if you are indeed being banned on some radio stations, do you still think you can get this product out and do you think the kids are going to respond to you the way they did before?

CN: Well, since we were talking about Megadeth, we are very grateful and appreciate their acceptance to the masses. They are paving the way for bands like us to get farther up in the big commercial radio stations. Years ago it was bands like Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith who were the big names and I think Megadeth and Metallica will be considered in the same superstar fame thing in the future. Which, in turn will leave more room for us and bands like us to really make it.

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PROPHET

By Jake Wisely

There is justice in this world. I know because a band like Prophet is starting to hit success. After nearly eight years of clubs, line-up changes, and growing popularity, this New Jersey five-piece signed to Megaforce/Atlantic and put out "Cycle Of The Moon", an LP which demonstrates superb talent and diversity.

I was fortunate enough to speak to the whole band before their show in Minneapolis, in the midst of their U.S. and Canadian club tour, co-headlining with Leatherwolf. This happens to be Prophets first extensive tour, although they are veterans to the stage, and as vocalist Russell Arcara puts it, "We're really a live band."

"We're a little heavier (live) than we came across on the album," said bassist/vocalist Scott Metaxas. "the producer and record company didn't want us to come across too heavy, 'cause it's so hard to get on the radio."

With that kind of push towards the commercial scene, you might think it would've been better for Prophet to latch onto an arena act's tour as warm-up instead of hitting the club circuit, but Russell claims, "It's just to tighten us up and make the act perfect." Either way we should see Prophet backing someone big by the end of May. "We hooked up at the last minute with Leatherwolf, 'cause our record company wanted us out on tour," said Scott. "We had been speaking with White Lion about goin' out with them, but they got a couple major tours and the agency turned around and put us onto Leatherwolf and we jumped on the tour."

One thing that struck me was that Megaforce has typically been a speed metal label, boasting the likes of Anthrax, Overkill, and Testament, and only recently have delved into commercial metal. I wondered if there was any concern among the band before they signed that the label wasn't going to be able to break the band. Scott affirms that there was some thought about it, but, "When we signed to 'em, they had already had a big success with Ace Frehley, so he was more of a rock'n'roller, y'know? He's not exactly metal or thrash metal, so that kind of opened the doors for us. We said, 'Wow, they can do it with a regular rock'n'roll act!' "

"Cycle Of The Moon" is definitely the hottest commercially-aimed debut of the year. As Scott mentioned, it is a bit toned down compared to a live performance, but there's still a kick among its varying progressive styles. "We tried to go for an album like the old Led Zeppelin albums that had so much different atmospheres," said Scott. "The songs are all different."

The bands' progressive aspects come from years of listening to Rush, Yes, Kansas, Pink Floyd, etc., although they don't seem to be interested only in killer instrumentation. "We're more of a rock'n'roll band," claims Scott. "We always want to combine those elements with things like really heavy guitar playing. We don't like to cross over the boundry into fusion or anything."

Upon checking out the LP's cover, notice the irony of a half-buried bicycle resting on the surface of the moon, hence, "Cycle Of The Moon". It's really something you have to see (let alone notice) to enjoy, but the cleverness still cracks me. "We got Hugh Syme to do it," said Scott. "He did all the Rush album covers, like remember "Moving Pictures" where they're moving all the pictures into the museum? So, it's humor. It's really cool looking and serious looking, but then when you suddenly look at it closer, you say, 'Wow, that's really funny'."

It was taken from a scale model, using serious lighting techniques, while the earth in the background is nothing more than a painted basketball. The moon's surface looks incredibly realistic, and thanks to keyboardist Joe Zujkowski we know why: "The secret was crushed walnuts."

Since this was Prophets first real tour, I was able to ask a question that's been lurking in my mind for quite some time: "How realistic is the movie 'Spinal Tap'?" It was unanimously agreed that the movie was an incredibly accurate depiction of the touring life and, as Russell put it, "We've been definitely Spinal Tapped all over the place." Sheet Metal: "So, anything to say in closing?" Joe: " 'Tap into America!' " (Or is it "Prophet into America"?)

"A highly Prophet-able organization."

(It just had to be said. -Ed.)

TOXIK-World Circus LP (Roadracer)

Roadracer Records has consistently released the best and highest quality metal and thrash in the business. With Whiplash's "Ticket To Mayhem" LP, they put out my favorite thrash record of '87, and so far in '88, Toxik's "World Circus" LP ranks number one. Quite obviously, by citing these two releases, my metallic inclination is for the more technically advanced methods of speed metal, where Toxik now reigns.

Josh Christian, on Toxik guitars, is the sole composer of the material grooved on "World Circus", while the lineup of Mike Sanders on vocals, Brian Bonini on bass, and Tad Leger on drums, are the master technicians who pull this music off, with Christian in the lead.

Sanders takes the falsetto approach to vocalization, cracking among the best, with an absolutely original style. I only hope this isn't a detriment considering the strong dislike many thrash fans have for non-screamers or growlers. Fuck them anyways. As I've touched on, Christian is a wonderful composer, scripting incredibly advanced tracks and smattering them with his superior soloage and rhythmicity. His Vai-like riffs are burning and right-on, while Bonini would have to be blow-away on bass, just to keep up. The bass is always evident in this one guitar band, and I'm just happy those aren't my fingers. On the other side of Toxik's percussion unit, Tad Leger maximizes his perfect drum sound by laying down pulsating and rapid-fire fills. It is he that I most admire for holding this outfit together in the tightest and most articulate fashion, leading the rhythm and tempo changes like a ringmaster, to the "World Circus".

-Jake Wisely

GORE-Mean Man's Dream LP
(Fundamental)

"Mean Man's Dream" is one of the heaviest records ever recorded. If Black Sabbath had done a 40-minute long version of the Velvet Underground's "I Heard Her Call My Name" on "Paranoid", it would have sounded something like this. The band's name, the picture of a knife on the cover and song titles like "Chainsaw" and "Out For Sex" give an idea of what Gore's music sounds like. The press sheet says their "lyrics deal with violence in the line of classic gore movies." Although a lyric sheet was not included in the American release of this record, I can see the influence. Gore create the same kind of tension as a good horror movie using only guitar, (barely audible) bass and drums.

Although Gore are an instrumental trio, there are few guitar solos on this record. Guitarist Dieter de Sury is not particularly interested in showing off his virtuosity. He'd rather bang the listener over the head with the sheer force of his guitar playing. Every note on "Mean Man's Dream" sounds like it was violently wrenched out of the instrument. There are no pretty acoustic guitar intros to be found here. There are no breaks between songs either. The album just keeps building in intensity. Even though Gore write lyrics, they don't sing them. The vocals aren't missed at all. If anything, a singer would detract from the music.

Gore aren't strictly metal, but they take the best aspects of it. Elements of many bands (Swans, Black Flag/Gone, Metallica) are dropped in, but Gore seem to be going for the heaviest sound they can get. They've succeeded. I only hope they can keep it up. Watch for them on tour with the Henry Rollins band this summer.

-Steve Erickson

photo by Monica Dee

Toxik

NAKED RAYGUN-Jettison LP (Caroline)

On first listen, I decided there's no way in hell I'd let you metalheads just pass this up. By no means is the Raygun virgin to vinyl, but "Jettison" is purely their most detonating release to date, and I'd be absolutely ridden with guilt if I didn't lay it down within these pages.

It's not that "Jettison" is extremely different from past Raygun music--If anything, it's very much the same wall-of-sound punk rock that they've singularly provided for the past few years. It's just that this LP is honed, heavied, and hung like no other. For one thing, "Jettison" puts down an array of

sounds and feelings, pulsing and speeding, possibly due to two seperate producers and studios, not to mention a live cover of Stiff Little Fingers' "Suspect Device".

Breaking between a flat-out hard rock punch and that certain Chicago underground crunch, each song builds in, vocalizes, climaxes, and ends. There's nothing beyond fancy or intricate, but there's nothing below rockin'. The lyrics, as always, are either anthemic or out in left field. Either way, Naked Raygun is an intelligent punk band, and their music is unrivaled in it's genre.

-Jake Wisely

NAKED RAYGUN-Vanilla Blue 7"
(Sandpounder)

Now, if you're anything like me, you've always wondered wotta hunka-hunka burnin' marble'd look like spinnin' 'round on yer Kenner Close'n'PLay.'Course, fear of the damage such an experiment'd shirley cause has kept me from attemptin' it thus far. Well, them considerate folx in Naked Raygun've now given me a chance to realize my dream: their new single, "Vanilla Blue", is available on marbled white-with-blue-snatches vinyl! Hee hee! And it's loads of fun too! Everything I always imagined it to be.

Ya wanna know about the record?!! Well, gee, anyone with sense knows that Naked Raygun're the midwest's finest punkrot band! Geeze, these cats take Wire and Buzzcocks records into their system intravenously and come up with artsy punkpop sheet that didn't fergit the punk, like an amped-up Mission of Burma with 30-foot tall guitars.

"Vanilla Blue" is one of their typical anthems, featurin' plenny of John Haggerty's big fat Gibson damage. The flipside's rotsa yucks, with vocals from great American hero Slim Pickens (taken from "Blazing Saddles") set to some yee-haw last roundup twangin'. Get this 'un from the band's own Sandpounder Records, PO Box 148593, Chicago, IL. 60614. (Both tracks from "Vanilla Blue", plus three others, are also available on the CD version of "Jettison". -Ed.)

-Tim Stegall

BLOODLUST-Terminal Velocity EP
(Wild Rags)

Any thrash record is guaranteed a listening audience as long as it has some kind of decent distribution. There are always new fans willing to check something out and whether that record is truly good or bad, it's cool if you can mosh to it. Bearing this in mind, it's real easy for a band to be generic

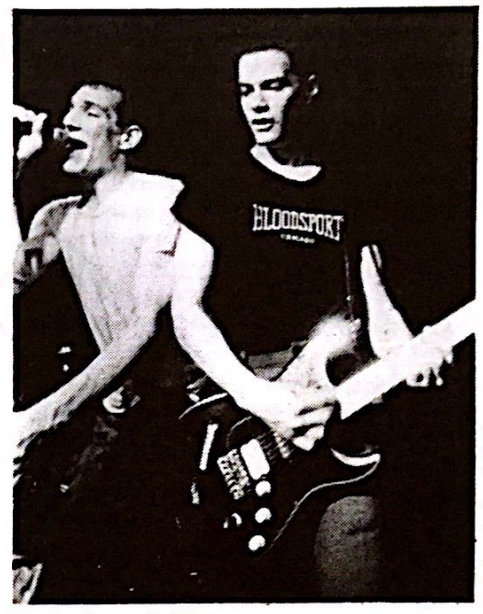

photo by Bonnie Graham

Naked Raygun

and to sound like ten or even a thousand others. The process of weeding out begins.

Does a band hold talent? Is their record well produced? Does it have good distribution? Do they have what it takes to continue if the going gets rough? Does the band have a former member of some band past or present that is a noteworthy selling point? Do they have a local or widespread under-

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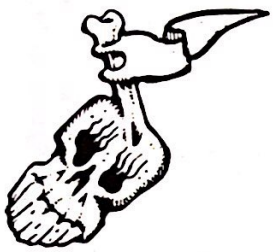
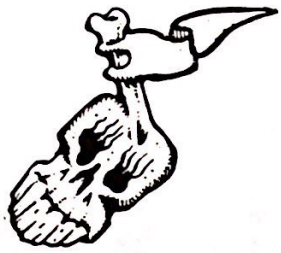
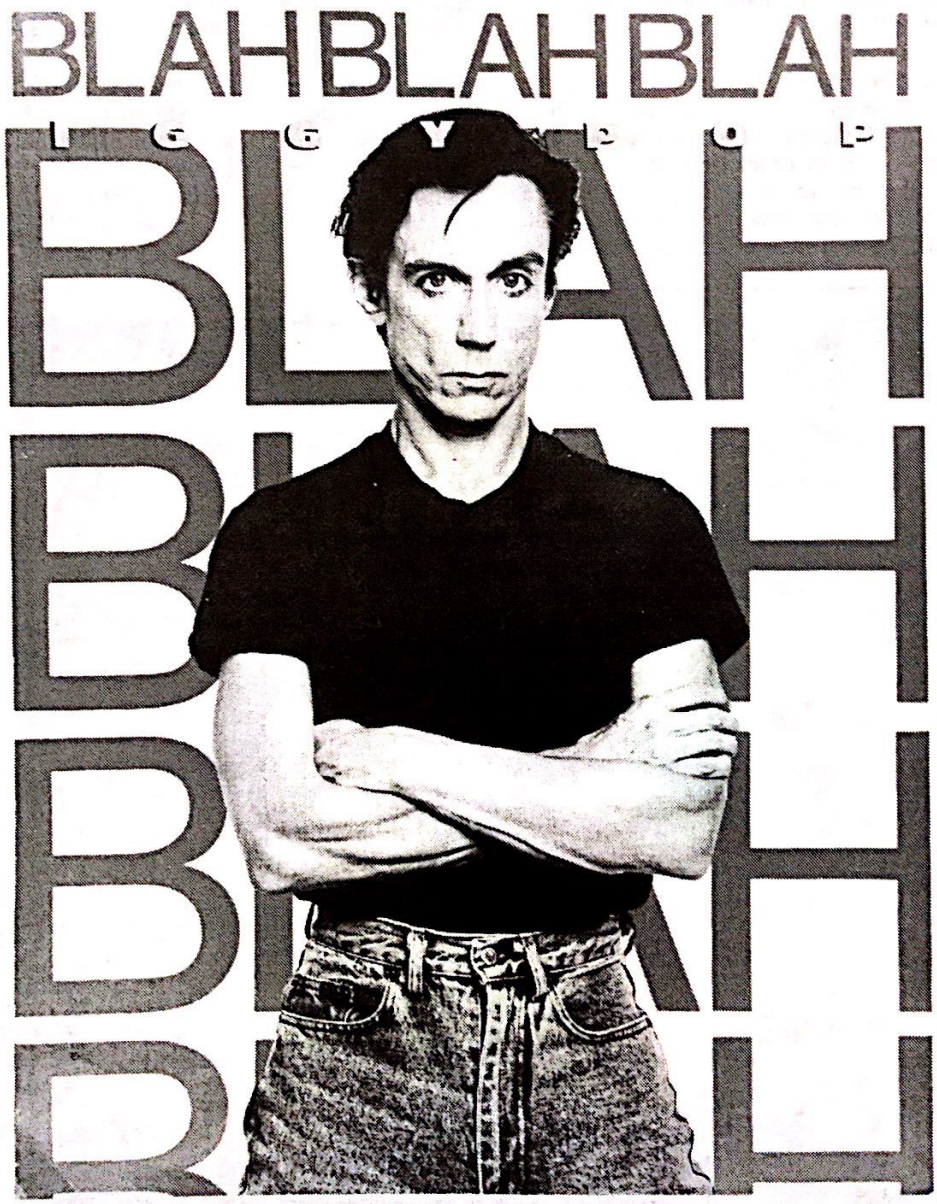
White Noise Riot From Teenage Babylon

A Column Of Punk Rockness From The Keyboard Of Tim Stegall

Greetings to you all, my pretties. 'Tis time for another rip thru the punkrock underworld and any other underworlds we care to rip thru. We'll kick it off with a coupla excavations or rare/unished **Iggy and the Stooges** shit. Now, I shouldn't hafta explain the Stooges to ya, but I realize that some of ya're sorely lackin' in the taste department, so I will. The Stooges invented punkrock, along with the MC5 and the New York Dolls(whom I explained last issue), and they were doin' it in the late sixties, when nihilist rock was way outta fashion. Their's was a hateful music, and was higher energy'd than you are on a sugar rush, which also made 'em way outta fashion. Ringleader Iggy Pop was also a showman, another mark of outta fashioness. Only, Iggy's brand of showmanship wasn't yer typical brand, a la Elvis' shaky legs 'r Mick Jagger's James-Brown-as-flamin'-faggot schtick. Iggy'd much rather roll around in broken glass, or jack off, or launch himself into the third row of the audience(face first) than any of that sorta jive(even tho he also had shaky legs and a few James Brown steps at his disposal). Their music was loud, fast, brutal as fuck, with an attitude to match Iggy's demontoid stage antics: "Search And Destroy", "Raw Power", "Now I Wanna Be Your Dog", "Dirt"(a tender ballad which asked the musical question, "Do ya feel it when ya cut me?"). Outta fashion tho they may've been while they were alive, they were hailed as prophets when the punk beast finally roared, and alla the spikeys hailed Iggy as "Daddy" when they arose, thus revitalizin' th' ol' junkie slut's career. It's high time you dorkies learned to feeel it from the Ig, yaself.



Two different French record companies must feel the same way, 'cuz them frogs've ished a pair of Stoogerockin' platters, both originatin' from the daze when gonzo guitar demon James Williamson was wrenchin' the frets fer les Stoogies. "Pure Lust" is a piss yellow 12-incherooni in a limited edition of three thou that feetchers the lordly-but-lost-to-the-sands-o'-time "I Got A Right"/"Gimmee Some Skin" 45 and a pair from th' pudly-and-thankfully-lost-to-th'-sando'-time "Kill City" elpee, Iggy's first stab at a solo thingie(and a damned weak stab at that). Of the latter material, "Johanna" is the best of the lot, but you want this ball o' wax fer the 45 shit, which runs over ya like a runaway steamroller with 12-inch steel spikes attached to it. Pure loco-motive frenzy, with a Williamson solo that caused the windows in my room to shatter all t' heck. I mean, this cat wuz totally hellbent on turnin' every note he played into a skitterin' loony mess, piercin' yer ears in the process. Yew'll get plenny of that outta "Rubber Legs", as well. Culled from the same sessions as the "I Got A Right" stuff(demos that were done for a followup album to "Raw Power" that never got etched,

thanx to the self-destructo routine they pulled in '74), this also has a version of "Johanna", tho this one makes the one on "Pure Lust" sound like godhead. The rest of "Rubber Legs" purty much IS, includin' another drag-me-thru-th'-gore ballad called "Open Up And Bleed" and a studio rendition of one of the highlights of their classick (tho now out o' print) live rec "Metallic K.O.", "Cock In My Pocket", which takes the Chuck Berry boogie routine to places ol' Chuck never dreamed of takin' it. "Rubber Legs" should be available at yer local diskery. Write Revenge Records, 80 Avenue du Maine, 75014 Paris for "Pure Lust".

That same froggywentacourtin' hedidrideahooh disc agency that gave ya "Pure Lust" is also responsible for a new 45 by the **Dead Boys**, one of the '77 vintage poonk aggros that owed EVERYTHANG to the Stooges. Through the lowest-fi sound you could probably git, they blast out the Stooges' "Search And Destroy" and their own "Callin' On You". Both songs're resurrected from tapes of one of their last blowouts at CBGB's, and 're also on piss-colored wax, and also feature a real snazzy cardboard cover with beautiful color pix of the Dead Boys snarlin' it up. Word has it that this was unauthorized and that Stiv, Cheetah, and Crew're takin' legal action, so snap it up 'fore it's illegal to do so.

More Stateside Stoogiod rawk comes courtesy of **The Original Sins** from Pennsylvania. They put out this 45 last year, "Just 14" b/w "Sugar Sugar", that had an A-side that took a total Stoogely take on the sub-Motown riff the Doors used on "Touch Me". Spray feedback all over the fuckin' place, have leader J.T. scream bloody murder in a really (Johnny) Rotten croak about some underage fuck he has the hots for, and you have one of the most mind-skewerin', gut-smashin' 45 topside in recent memory. Yep, the flip's that totally subversive Archies classick of olde(the first--and probably ONLY--Top 40 hit about oral sex), done like the Velvet Underground mighta, right down to a quote from "Waiting For My Man" at the end. Best U.S. 7-inch I've heard since the Alter Boys' "Piles", and now there's an Original Sins album out to boot. Tim Bob sez check it out. (Bar/None Records, P.O. Box 1704, Main Post Office, Hoboken, NJ 07030)

Australia's had a real hoppin' punkrawk scene for some time now, and mosta them antipodean pogo combos owe a heap to the Detroit high energy mania of the Stooges and MC5. The opening shot of the punkrock thingamabob in Oz was alil' piece of plastic called "(I'm) Stranded" by a Brisbane quartet called **The Saints**. Released almost concurrently with the first Ramones album and a full three months before "Anarchy In The U.K.", "(I'm) Stranded" was a total blur of crunchorama guitar chords and leader Chris Bailey's corrosive sneer. The whole blamed thing sounded like a juiced-up version of mid-sixties Brit R&B combo the Pretty Things if they were into the Stooges rather'n Chuck Berry, and to this day, "(I'm) Stranded" never fails to get me leapin' all over the place and bashin' my head through plaster and crashin' through my windows. The Saints are now, ahem, slightly subdued (though not uninteresting), but their Stateside label decided that the youth of today really need to hear the embryonic Saints scream of "(I'm) Stranded". Hence, you can now get a 12-incher called "Big Hits (On The Underground)" that features two of their most recent ditties, with "(I'm) Stranded" lurkin' on the back to pounce and deliver ye olde piledriver upon thee. Git piledriven by writing TVT Records, 59 West 19th Street, Suite 5B, New York, NY 10011.

The other topdawg of the Ozpunk conspiracy'd hafta be **Radio Birdman**, who were the Sex Pistols to the Saints' Ramones. The most Dee-troit of all the kangaroo punk bands, due to th' fact that they possessed a Detroit-born-und-bred guitslinger in their ranks named Denis Tek. Recordin' one painfully obscure EP and a pair of albums that're the absolute tits, Birdman're legends to this day, and that's 'cuz their sound was just like Australia itself-- big, brash, and untamed-- while still possessin' plenny of inner-city concrete and smog to boot. Their mantle's been carried on quite well by **Cellbate Rifles**, who have a real knack fer fittin' totally adult lyric content to ravin' teenage white noise frenzy. Their latest skull-fracturin' long player, "Roman Beach Party", smacks ya hard in the gut with an attack on televangelism called "Jesus On TV" and never lets up for its eleven tracks (tho I coulda done w/o the pseudo-Hendrix slowie "Ocean Shore"). Vocalist Damien Lovelock's gotta be the angriest young man around (and in his early 30's, yet! Take that Johnny Rotten!), with the best caustic snarl "in the biz"(as totally groovy cat Sammy Davis, Jr.'d say). Meanwhile, Damien Lovelock and Kent Steedman keep hurlin' enormous concrete guitar chunks at ya, and if they don't hit ya with those, their patented wah-wah abuse'll gitcha 'tween the eyes. I mean, can ya believe it? The WAH-WAH PEDAL, that most archaic of guitar effects, turned into the most potent weapon of destruction there is? Hearin's believin', so believe and be healed, brethren, by writin' What Goes On Records, Box 169, 151 First Avenue, New York, NY 10003.

That's all fer this edition of the only column you can dance to. Don't fergit to send them records, tapes, videos, 'zines, comic books, trading cards, used panties, and other important stuff to Tim Stegall, 1025 E. 5th St., Alice, Texas, 78332. Until next time, Alo-ho-ho-ha from heck!

ground following? Are they being promoted well? All this and much, much more to consider.

Judging strictly from their four-song "Terminal Velocity" 12" EP, Bloodlust (with ex-Abattoir vocalist Steve Gaines) have got what it takes. Absolutely incredible technical thrash. (Wild Rags Records, 2207 W. Whittier Blvd., Montebello, CA. 90640).

-Jake Wisely

CANDLEMASS-Nightfall LP (Metal Blade)

How many favorite albums do you own? A lot, I bet. How many of these albums do you consider superb metal works of art? A little less now, but still a good handful, right? Now, how about adding something by a band called Candlemass, and what happens to all your other favorite albums?

Let me tell you from my personal experience. I was in a store that stocked tons of metal albums searching for something better than all the cliche bands I kept wasting my money on. I asked the clerk for his recommendation and he went right for "Epicus, Doomicus, Metallicus" asking if I had heard it yet. When I said no, he put it on side one and played "Solitude". I had to look no further. I took the album home happily, discovering it wasn't just one excellent song on a fair album but an album that blew away everything else in my collection. The musicianship, the songwriting, the vocals chock full of emotion--I even noticed the outstanding drumming, which is something I rarely do. The whole package was quality stuff. Never had I been so impressed so quickly by any band. Then, just when I thought I was in the highest form of musical bliss, along comes an even better Candlemass album. Only two members from "Epicus..." remain on the second album entitled "Nightfall". Even though the singers sound similar, the one from the first album was not an official member of the band. Messiah Marcolin vocalizes on "Nightfall" and does not disappoint. In fact, he takes all the power, clarity, and emotion of the former singer and triples it in excellence. Just like on the TV commercials that advertise products which were already proven to be the best, then come out with a new improved version of that product. That's Candlemass' "Nightfall".

Leif Edling is obviously the band's genius. Bassist and writer of both music and lyrics on both albums, his fascination with death and evil vs. good is evident. But in no way are these lyrics typical. They are done with taste and creativity. None of it is outright satanism or the violent bleed, kill, die stuff. Neither is any of it too abstract to understand either. Music is for enjoyment after all, not for in depth analysis. Candlemass is intelligent without being overly heady.

By examining his songs, you will see Leif does a lot of thinking and a lot of feeling. These are not just words written to fill up the music. These are words to fill up the mind and the heart. And how refreshing it is to find this in an area of music which is often thought of as just "bang your head" not "use your head". With Candlemass, you can do both.

-Vivienne Reilly

VINNIE VINCENT INVASION - All Systems Go LP (Chrysalis)

This is one outfit deserving of a success story. Armed with new vocalist Mark Slaughter, Vinnie and the boys have finally taken steps in the right direction to guarantee a little less snubbing. In came Mark, off came the makeup, slower went the solos, better went the songwriting, and out came "All Systems Go".

A very strategic album indeed, the Invasion lays it all out in track one, "Ashes To Ashes", with incredible work from both Slaughter and Vincent, the axeman, making the best track first. From then on the album breaks from radio to scorch and back again. The Invasion probably has one of the greatest up and coming voices in the business with Slaughter, whose range is in constant control of the mood and intensity.

Vinnie has been ignored as a great guitar player long enough. With all makeup gone, there are no more excuses. His picking is generally slower, though his use of effects is brilliant. He's always had my admiration and I think "All Systems Go" will gain the respect of many others.

This LP is easily Vincent's best since Kiss and it's easily one of the better commercial releases so far in '88. It comes highly recommended.

-Jake Wisely

AGONY-The First Defiance LP (Combat)

Hailing from the north, Swedish thrash merchants Agony are making their presence felt on their debut album for Combat. Of course yours truly has been upon these experts for over a year. The classic "Execution of Mankind" demo is the reason for my arousement. The band has a distinct sound of their own, although I can see a slight Exodus influence, which doesn't draw away from them at all. In fact, Phil Rind (Sacred Reich), the ultimate heavy critic said, "The band does not lack heaviness." So if you're catching all this, I'm sure you'll get the picture; this album is brutal.

Of course, I could get crazy and review all the

continued on page 28

photo by Alex Solca

Bloodlust

D.R.I.

4 of a Kind

"As anybody who's heard D.R.I. will confirm, the San Francisco quartet are one of the fastest and heaviest bands in the genre."
-Dave Ling / Metal Hammer

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ENIGMA

photo by Dan Corrigan

TAKEN ALIVE

This issue I've broken from the usual round of live thrashy blurbs to honor the greatest entertainer in the world: David Lee Roth. -Ed.

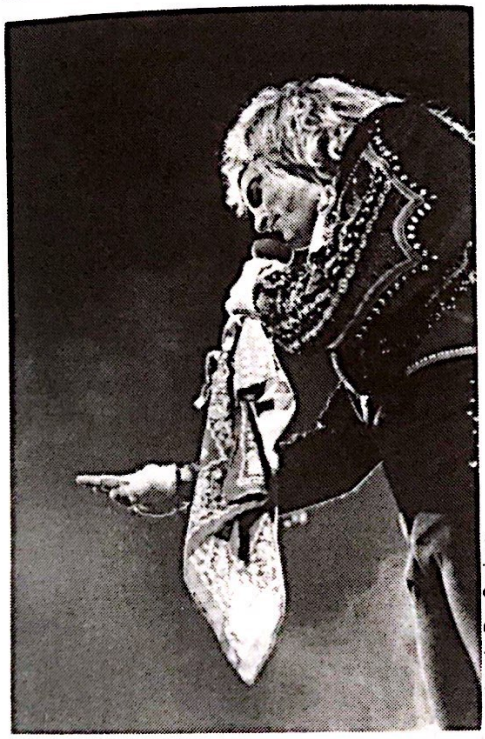

photo by Dan Corrigan

By Jake Wisely

There are very few people in the performing end of rock that I actually hold as "heroes". I'm talking about the kind of bigger-than-life beings that inspire such awe that if we were to come face to face, I would be thrown into a stupor, eyes bugged and tongue on the floor. With this type of admiration so scarce, you might think it nearly impossible to have two such jaw-droppers in one band, but doubt not, the team of David Lee Roth and Steve Vai are having me pull double duty in the hero worship category.

I guess that you could say that I'm really a rather new David Lee Roth Fan, having only gotten into the "Van Halen I" LP a couple years ago, then losing myself in the five albums that followed. When Roth split from the group, my immediate inclination was to follow him, especially when I heard Sammy Hagar was his replacement, and after all, Diamond Dave is the greatest personality on earth.

When Roth was forming his new band, he had in mind a group of world class musicians that would give guitarist Eddie Van Halen more than just a run for his money, maybe for his fans too. Hence, Steve Vai, a ten year Zappa veteran and a guitar player that could do Eddie and way beyond; Billy Sheehan, a bassist who runs scales faster than any budding metal guitarist; and Gregg Bissonette, a graduate of Maynard Ferguson's fusion outings.

On last year's "Eat 'Em And Smile" tour, I was blown away by the interplay between Vai and Sheehan, blending solos and trading licks. However, somewhere between tours, Sheehan left the group and was replaced by Matt Bissonette, brother to DLR drummer, Gregg, leaving what we might call a talent gap. So, on Roth's current "Skyscraper" tour, expect less mind-boggling soloage. In fact, don't expect anything in the way of a drum solo, and only a mere blurb of unaccompanied riffs out of Vai, though both musicians do prove themselves within the boundries of song.

As for Roth himself-- what can I say? The man is the epitome of energy, charisma, charm, and arrogance, leaving no gap in the action. Between wielding a mean steel baton(?), scaling from the lights harnessed in climbing gear, ascending a rope ladder in what we might call gymnast fashion, lowering among the audience in a boxing ring, and literally surfing back to stage (during "California Girls", of course), there is no shortage of physical fitness in this man, whose only vice seems to be the fire water.

It's only a shame that this conglomeration of sheer talent is now forced to cater to the lowest common denominator. It seems that most rock fans don't want to see virtuosity in action, indeed, they only want to rock. Sadly, this public sentiment has affected Roth's live shows, demonstrated by the differences between his last two solo tours and albums.

There are no more twenty minute solo sessions on stage, and many of their best songs from "Eat 'Em And Smile" remained unplayed (I fear that's because Matt Bissonette couldn't even begin to play them). It's also a shame that DLR has to resort to old popular Van Halen numbers, like "Hot For Teacher", "Jump", "Panama", "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love", and "You Really Got Me", to make sure his audience was happy, even though he had as much of a hand in writing those tunes as anyone in Van Halen. However, David Lee Roth will always put on a good show. He was born to entertain and he still has me smiling well after the concert.

Of course most of the recent "Skyscraper" LP was brought out live, and I don't think you need a run-down of each song, but, needless to say, popular songs like "Just Like Paradise" went over the best in live, heavy fashion, while the Van Halen numbers were sure to please. The most memorable part for me, however, was a Latin-into-Jamaican percussive piece that included the whole band on steel drums, backed by three dudes in sailor suits on a bass drum, cymbols, and toms.

Though this show might not be as memorable as the last, I loved it and so did most of the screaming fans that packed the Met Center. DLR has, you might say, progressed even further into commerciality, but at least I know what he had in mind.

photo by Dan Corrigan

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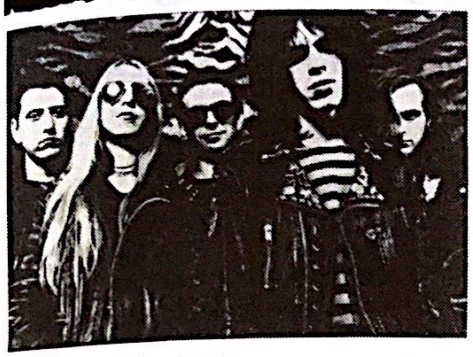
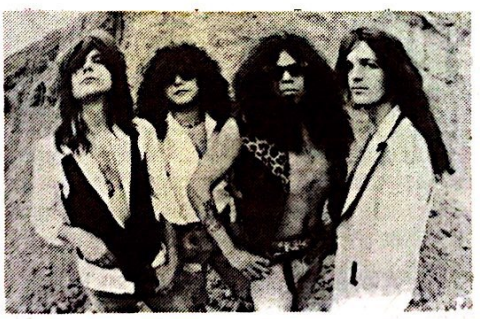


The Birdhouse

By Jake Wisely

Praise the Lord! It's another slew of record reviews packed into a very small area, designed with the intent to, you guessed it, cram a lot of information into a short space. While your arms are still in the air and the echo of 1000 amens subsides, there's no better time to discuss **Barren Cross'** "Atomic Arena" LP for Enigma (1750 E. Holly Ave., PO Box 2428, El Segundo, CA. 90245-2428). Their approach to Christian metal is subtle and certainly not preachy. They obviously have commerciality in mind, but their music is still crunchy and beyond saturating airplay (thank God!). Maiden is the overall tone and definately worthwhile is my overall diagnosis. My diagnosis isn't so definate on **Celtic Frost's** "I Won't Dance" EP on Noise International (5 Crosby St, New York, NY. 10013). Basically for collectors and very gung ho Frost fans, this three-songer is grooved with "I Won't Dance" off of the "Into The Pandemonium" LP, as well as a lengthy mix of "One In Their Pride", the big-beat mutha, and a complete operetic version of "Sorrows of the Moon", "Tristesses de la Lune". I dig it, but would you? Otherwise, this next record I have no doubt you will dig. "Act of God" is the new LP from **Znowhite** on Roadracer Records (225 Lafayette St., Suite 709, New York, NY. 10012). This is one of the meanest, heaviest and most abrasive releases to garner the moniker thrash that I've ever laid my ears on. Imagine a female James Hetfield on vocals backed by big Ian Tafoya on wrecker ball guitars and then one giant jackhammer for a rhythm section. Blow me down! **Blind Illusion** is the Bay Area four-piece that's been keeping guitarist Larry Lalonde busy since the demise of Possessed. This Combat (187-07 Henderson Ave., Hollis, NY. 11423) fireball doesn't crank like Possessed's last wax ("Eyes of Horror"), but then again, Possessed didn't leave traces of psychedelic and hard rock... Next, a real tough one to figure out, is from the four younguns that make up **Spazztic Blurr**. Thanks to Earache Records (PO Box 144, Nottingham NG3 4GE, UK), we all can enjoy this perverse 'humor-core' in LP form, though this actually has more musical integrity than most crossover acts. But, if you want integrity without the humor, I'd suggest picking up **Intruder's** "Live To Die" LP on Iron Works Records (Box 459, Maywood, CA. 90270). Speed metal with possible commerciality in mind is an accurate tag for these straightforward heavies, while it's only too bad the cover art isn't fit for a second grader's notebook. As usual there are a few grooves I'd like you to spin that go above and beyond the realms of metal, the first of which is from England's **The Birdhouse** on Link Records (277 Church St., New York, NY. 10013). "Burnin' Up" is the name and it ain't Madonna, but it is burnin'. From psycho punk, to thrashing rock, to wigged-out pop, The Birdhouse is the proving grounds for multi-formed musical frenzy. Keeping said mayhem in mind, might I direct you towards **The Hickolds'** most recent slab o' dementia LP for Toxic Shock Records (Box 242, Pomona, CA. 91769), entitled "We're In It For The Corn". As their appelcation suggests, these



Uncle Sam

boys are the result of Texas farm country, and as we all know, punk rock and beastiality mesh wonderfully. Speaking of sex, there's nothing I wouldn't do to meet the chic whose supple form graces the cover of **Uncle Sam's** "Heaven or Hollywood" LP on Skeller Records (PO Box 17423, Rochester, NY. 14617). Talk about provacative, is a woman that's nude from the waist down holding a razor something you'd do a double-take at? But that's beside the point. Remember Iggy, the Dolls, and the Dictators? Well, there you go, but don't forget a little Alice. And now, how could I get this far from metal without forcing **No Means No** down your throat? "The Day Everything Became Nothing" is their most recent sonic slab o' six songs in 12" form, and Alternative Tentacles is to thank (PO Box 11458, San Francisco, CA. 94101). Bass punk produced like hot funk with big drums and rhythm guitars, and I mean rhythm. This begs you to skank, then forces you to bang. Definately up to the high standards already set by their "Sex Mad" LP of last year (which you should also buy). This next LP from **Coven** is almost manditory for cover art alone, but I won't hesitate to give the band credit for a mean mosher, though the lyrics are either too stupid or too funny. Despite shit production through a tin can, "Blessed Is The Black" lays out some mean licks in various metal fashions. Ever Rat provides (PO Box 99284, Seattle, WA. 98199). Now pretend you're playin' bucking bronco atop one of Ronnie's big metal projectiles and "Manic Panic" is the situation from **MX Machine**. Speed metal a la four young and heavy dudes on a mission to enlighten the metaloid masses. If they get what's coming to 'em, you'll be hearing "No Glam Fags" and "Fuck The Neighbors" right next to shit from "OU812", but then check out the technical stuff. For technicality in a different light, grab **Satan's** new "Into The Future" EP on SPV/Steamhammer (101 Fredrick Ave., Bellmore, NY. 11710).Despite a name fit for thrash, Satan put hard rock/early British heavy metal sensibilities to work. Add some sort of speed and peel out with hot instrumentation in tow. Take a similar hard rock stand, but this time make it definate, and you have **Green River's** "Rehab Doll" LP on Sub-Pop Records (PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA. 98102). If Guns'n'Roses has made it, there's no doubt in my mind that Green River can as well. Riffs into rhythms into Aerosmith meets Godzilla. Get!!! And while you're at it, pick up **Seduce's** new "Too Much, Ain't Enough" LP for I.R.S. Metal (100 Universal City Plaza, Building 422, Universal City, CA. 91608). Take fellow Motor City homeboy Ted Nugent and back him with Metallica. Definately a new and highly heavy sound. Other wax of interest includes **Soul Asylum's** new hard rock masterpiece LP, "Hang Time" (Twin/Tone-A&M), **Damien's** Priest-like grooves on their "Every Dog Has It's Day" LP (Select), **Krokus'** best yet, "Heart Attack" (MCA), making almost all of their previous shit worthwhile, and **Mayhem's** wicked cool thrasher, "Burned Alive" LP (Black Dragon). Time to give the Mountain-man his dues: Yes, **Leslie West** is back bluesing that rock along with Jack Bruce, resulting in "Theme" (Passport), an LP worthy of West's return.

photo by Dan Corrigan

Soul Asylum

photo by Glenn Clark

NECROPHAGIA

By Jake Wisely

With "Season Of The Dead", Necrophagia easily put out one of the best thrash albums of '87, and now that their lineup has been completely shaken up, remaining vocalist Killjoy, promises even more with "Compelled By Fear". Hopefully slated for a July release, "Compelled..." will utilize almost a completely different band, with Killjoy and bassist Bob James the only ones remaining. "The other guys, they pretty much wanted to do their own things", said Killjoy."They weren't really progressing musically the way that I was hoping this thing would go."

Killjoy offers his antidote for this kind of stagnation: "The main key, in my opinion, is originality-- doing something different. Too many bands are happy with rehashing the same stuff and doin' the same stuff over. They do it good, but it's like they're not willing to experiment a little bit or bring some other influences in . . . To make it in the music business you have to be fresh and you have to keep offering new ideas."

Sheet Metal: What do you think separates Necrophagia?

Killjoy: A lot of people who don't look into our lyrics say they write about blood or guts or whatever. I try to tell horror stories with my lyrics. I think that sets us apart a little bit.

SM: What prompts you to write about gore when you could just as easily write about getting drunk or something?

KJ: Mainly I'd say because it's something I'm personally really into. I can remember being five years old and on weekends I couldn't wait till Chiller Theatre came on and see the latest Dracula movie, or Frankenstein, and ever since then I'm constantly watching horror movies or something along those lines. I write a lot of short horror stories. So, it's just something I'm comfortable with. I feel like if I can write about something I have actual feelings towards, some actual interest in, it comes off more interesting to the person (listening).

Necrophagia's songs are certainly interesting, and let's hope that "Compelled By Fear" can live up to the horrifying standards set by "Season Of The Dead". Killjoy is confident the new musicians are capable. "The new guys have a lot more talent, and I'm not just saying that. That's one of the reasons I got new people-- looking for more talent. I didn't settle for just anyone . . . I wrote a lot of the material on that record("Season..") myself, but I don't want all the weight on my shoulders. I want people that are capable of having some cool input.

Necrophagia had songs included on the "Speed Metal Hell" and "Thrash Metal Attack" compilations, put out by New Renaissance, before their own LP was released. Killjoy, however, expressed his distaste for those tracks and insists that you listen to the new material. "Season Of The Dead" has pushed sales of over 10,000, and rightfully so. It is definitely a killer.

(Subnote: Those of you brave enough to pick up "Season..." will notice an immense special thanks list on the back cover. This is an important part of what makes Killjoy and Necrophagia so cool. "There's so many people that had helped us along the way. . . There's people that are really cool and have helped the scene too. I just felt that everyone deserves some recognition, 'cause I know I always liked to see my name on something before I was in a band.")

If all goes according to plan, "Compelled By Fear" will see a July release and we will see the new Necrophagia on tour soon after. Otherwise, look for the limited edition picture disc release of "Season Of The Dead", with more incredible Drew Elliott artwork, and be warned, Don't listen at night. . .

By Jake Wisely

photo by Mark Weiss

Fifth Angel

Lately I've found myself getting into a lot more commercially-oriented metal, possibly because the notion of 'commercial metal' has changed slightly over the past couple years. It's not odd around my part of the country to turn on the radio and catch Metallica or other such forces in the speedier fashion of metal, on a regular basis. I think that this has influenced the commercial trends into a little bit faster and more abrasive styles, while still retaining strong melodies and catchy riffs. Fifth Angel is a prime example of the overall heaviness now starting to saturate the airwaves.

Now under the Epic label, Fifth Angel's first LP, originally released in 1986 by Shrapnel in the states, has been rereleased, sporting new artwork, photos, and precision Terry Date production. Even being a year and a half old, their self-titled LP still seems to represent the band well. Fifth Angel's guitarist, Ed Archer, explains Epic's tactics: "They thought it would be best to rerelease that album, which I agree with 'em, because the (original) release in the states on Shrapnel was sort of, uh, it was hard to find. And I think there's a lot of people that would've been turned onto it and would've bought it if they knew about it, and also it just wasn't there."

Fifth Angel drummer, Ken Mary has been quite visible lately, between U.S. and European tours playing for Alice Cooper and participating in David Chastain's new projects, not to mention other musical endeavors. Ed expressed that Ken's abscence might actually be beneficial, allowing the rest of the band to begin work on new tunes for their next Epic LP. They've also been able to set up a tour for when he returns. Ken is able to promote Fifth Angel throughout Europe by way of interviews, etc., even though the group was not able to shoot a video and rehearse as a complete outfit. "We all understand what the situation is," said Ed. "Actually the way everything is working out with him going on tour, I think it's working out for the better as a whole for Fifth Angel, because it gives us some time to take care of things here that he doesn't really need to be around for... By the time he comes back we can start rehearsing for the hopefully upcoming tour."

The group believes that they will definitely be tight enough to tour, allowing enough time for Ken to settle back in. Hopefully we can expect to see them with Yngwie and Lita Ford in June or July, though it's still tentative. The band doesn't seem to favor hitting the club circuit. "We would rather not," said Ed. "We would rather get on, shit, the best tour we could possibly get, but it may work out that that may be our only other alternative. Do a club tour or don't tour at all. If it comes down to that we'll have to see what kind of arrangements can be made: what kind of club tour, how long of a tour, and that type of thing. We are really hoping that we can get on as a warm-up act for theatre-sized places or arena-sized places . . . I think it would come across better in a larger place. It's sort of a bigger-than-life type of thing. I think that it would just work better than being shrunken down to a club."

The release of Fifth Angel's second LP is uncertain, though it will be through Epic/CBS worldwide, and Terry Date (Metal Church, Liege Lord) will be on production. "Working with him, we have total artistic freedom," said Ed, "opposed to having somebody else who says, 'This is the way it is'."

"The way it's been going so far, it's going to be a bit of a departure from the first one," claims Ed. "It's gonna be heavy, not any heavier than the first one, but I think there will be more variety, more peaks and valleys." I'm certainly anxious to hear new material from Fifth Angel, and hopefully we'll see something soon after their return from the road.

Paul Gilbert continued

SM: Basically we've talked only about you and your guitar playing. Does that bother you at all?

PG: Well, I figure if it's an interview with me . . . I wouldn't be able to give much cool information on much else.

SM: But, I mean, Racer X is a band. It's obviously a band with Paul Gilbert playing guitar, and do you want people to know it as that, or would you like to see Jeff(Martin) become a really popular vocalist, etc.?

PG: I think that it'll go like what happens when people see us live. It's obvious that everyone in the band is definitely a high-calibre musician that can hold their own, and pretty much everybody gets equal time. A lot of our new tunes have more focus on the vocals. I think that'll really help out Jeff a lot. In the past he's been kind of fighting my guitar riffs. Bruce(Bouillet) and I both have unaccompanied solos and both do a lot of solos in the tunes. John(Alderete) has got a bass solo and gets a lot of stuff in the tunes and probably runs around a lot more than anyone else. And Scott(Travis), I think on the new album especially, he's got a drum solo on there that will redefine drum solos.

SM: So you do see the band as a unit?

PG: Yeah, that's really why I formed it that way. If I had wanted it to be more in the spotlight, I think I would've gotten more guys who would just lay back and let me solo twenty-four hours a day.

tracks, but it's useless. Each cut is distinct and recognizable. The strongest cuts being "The Execution of Mankind", "Mass Manipulation", and "Night of the Emperor". "Deadly Legacy" has got to have one of the most unexpected beginnings, but welds at a hundred RPM's by mid song.

In summary, "The First Defiance" is a definate must for all fans of all metal.

-Joe Lopez

Voi Vod continued

SM: Have you done any in the past?

S: Off the first album, "Voi Vod". Off the Second, "Ripping Headache". Off the third, "Ravenous Medicine". We've done four videos. "Voi Vod" was shot live. The second is live, too. We put some computer effects and drawings from Away in the third one. For our new one, we're going to add some computer effects. We have to mix it up.

SM: Anything else you'd like to say?

S: Just look out for the new album. It's our best album. It's got a lot of words inside. I hope that everyone realizes that it's not garbage. It's got a lot of energy in it. It's original.

SM: It seems like your lyrics have a lot of political undertones. Would you like to go into that at all?

S: We're not into the Dead Kennedys' way of getting a point across. We're upset about many things, which gets into political stuff, but not shouting against someone or some system. We're describing the way they are. We have a lot of opinions, but we're not going to take specific positions about politics or whatever. We're just describing things the way they are in the Voi Vod world.

SM: What were the Voi Vod?

S: It was a troupe of barbarians a long time ago. We took the name because we are very aggressive and violent. We just wanted to describe the new world. Voi Vod is the one. We speak for us.

SM: What do you think the record after "Dimension Hatross" will be like?

S: We've got some ideas for it, but I can't tell you yet. We're still working on it. I don't know exactly what it's going to sound like. Piggy & Blacky just got some ideas together. We didn't know what the record after "Killing Technology" was going to be like. We'll find something for this one, too.

SM: Are you doing any videos off it?

S: Yeah, we did a video for the second song, "Tribal Convictions". I haven't seen it yet. It's gonna be out in a few weeks.

GRAY MATTER

GRAY MATTER #3 out in December 1987!!! Similar style to last issue with excellent printing and high quality photos. This time around: interviews with TESTAMENT, ARMORED SAINT, D.R.I., CANDLEMASS, CORONER, VOIVOD, THANATOS, XYSTER, PRIMAL SCREAM, SIEGE'S EVEN, and SIREN. Literally tens of album reviews, a huge increase in demo reviews, and an expanded underground section. Readers' poll, Ink Array, Global Communiqué are some new sections in the 'zine. More show reviews are featured, and new editorial subjects are probed in depth (of couse). If you want to experience the vast spectrum of metal/hardcore/(and music in general) then send $3.00 ppd. ($4.00 outside N. America) to: GRAY MATTER / 5319 Peterson Cir. / Flower Mound, TX 75028 / USA. Also, be kind enough to send a list of your ten fave demos and a list of your ten fave LP's. (Please make checks + money orders payable to Chris Oriold).

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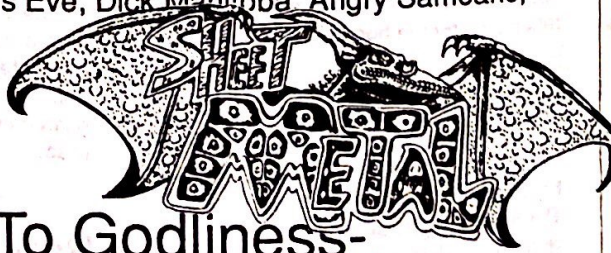

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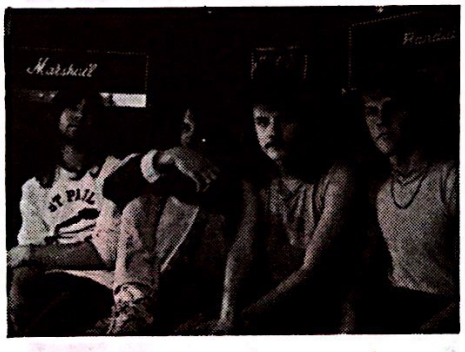
NUBILES

Nubiles is a regular section in Sheet Metal, focusing on bands still in their demo stage. All groups are invited to submit their cassette or recording for review here ("Nubiles", c/o Sheet Metal Magazine, 2235 France Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55416), but please try to include a bio, photo and price information, if possible. If a band does interest you here, drop them a line for more info and I'm sure they'll respond.

Forced Entry-Thrashing Helpless Down demo: Certainly one of the heaviest demos this time around, "Thrashing Helpless..." features talented guitar and bass work, odd rhythms, and above all, originality. Often times, these four tracks will chug or plow along in Slayeresque fashion, only to be pulled out by diverse styles of riffing, light and heavy, or by distinct bridges and appendages. 4822 228th S.W., Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043.

Torment-demo: Definately a high point in the growing demos-to-be-reviewed pile, Torment is a talented and professional New Jersey outfit with original ideas on how thrash should be approached. Behind good production, these five songs rely on alternating rhythms and song structures, tight solos, and diverse vocals to cover all bases of metal. $4.00 from Jon Eleazar, PO Box 26, Ramsey, NJ 07446.



The Coup de Grace-Bombs Away demo: I can guarantee you that I have a major bias towards the Coup, considering their locality and all, but I honestly believe these guys are doing some blow-away thrash with an edge hardly seen among other 'four-man football teams'. After repeated listens, quirks and structural fragments attach to your brain, making something memorable about each of the four songs. 46 Center Rd., Circle Pines, MN 55014.

Formicide-demo: I'd be surprised to see Formicide remain unsigned for long. Their superior crossover attack doesn't leave much to be desired, considering talent, power, a degree of technicality and good production are all evident. The songwriting is catchy, incorporating sufficient changes in tempo and worthy soloage, while the vocals are exclamatory growling, though still fairly original. PO Box 615, Tewksbury, MA 01876.

Empyre-demo: Verging on progressive hard rock, but more along the lines of upbeat pop, Empyre is a three-piece keyboard backed unit that holds a lot in common with newer AOR Rush. They have a late '70's new wave feel reminiscent of Blondie or early Cars, but seem to be a little less seductive or sophisticated. Produced by Joe Bouchard (B.O.C.). PO Box 2404, Setauket, NY 11733.

Kil D'Kor-demo: I'm not sure if this represents what Kil D'Kor is doing today, considering this demo is a 1985 release. However, in the three years since this recording, the band could only progress (hopefully). Somewhere between low budget (demo stage) epic speed metal and punk rock, Kil D'Kor present three well done tracks. I can only imagine what their anthemy tunes would be like given high quality production. A newer four-song demo is available. PO Box 98404, Seattle, WA 98188.

photo by Andrew Amundsen

Avatar-Sadistic Trump demo: Four songs from this relatively young Minneapolis four-piece hold power, speed and intensity, though the band still searches for that seperating factor. It may be in the vocals, while not melodic, they tend to create hook and melody lines after repeated listens. As the band develops, no doubt, they will progess and improve, but in the mean time they hold claim to a quality thrash demo that outdoes the majority. Avatar is far from bland or boring and in a local scene just sprouting, they can only get bigger. $4.00 from Rob Solberg, 1580 27th Ave. NW, New Brighton, MN 55112.

Sindrome-Into the Halls of Extermination demo: Say we're talking evil on a scale of 1 to 10, Sindrome snags a mean 10. It's not often a band can truly convey a sense of terror the way Slayer or a newer band like Infernal Majesty can. Sindrome could easily lay waste given the right production, allowing the restrained power oozing through the murky sound of this tape to rip open. However, the lack of quality production here is leveled by way of a full-color cassette cover and overall professionality in presentation. Five songs of sheer sin available through Midwest Management, 811 Stonegate Dr., Highland Park, IL 60035.

Mesomorph-demo: Those of you familiar with Alice Cooper's muscle-bound touring lineup (including guitarist Kane Roberts and drummer Ken Mary) will no doubt recognize bassist Steve Steele. Mesomorph is Steele's steady band (along with brother Eddie on drums and Al Rowe on guitar). For those of you that do not know what mesomorph means, it's a "body type characterized by powerful chest and limbs, solid muscle structure and great strength." Look at a photo and the gimmick is obvious. The sound is hard edged commercial metal, biting and sometimes speedy. If given the right production on an LP, things would definately click. Iron Door Productions, PO Box 475, E. Syracuse, NY 13057-0475.

Redrum-Power Corrupts demo: Redrum is a California five-piece that has more of a groove than their name implies. Despite the lack of production, something I'm beginning to overlook in demos, Redrum is instrumentally and vocally very sound, holding some talent in it's ranks. Not every song is a gem, but the majority of these five with a live side two are diverse and potent, and groovin'. PO Box 420687, Sacramento, CA 95842.

The demo front

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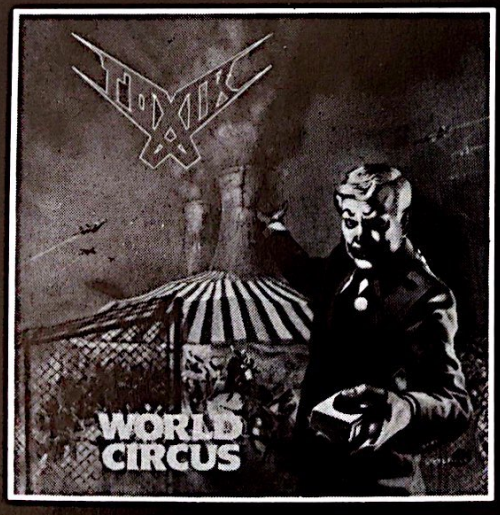

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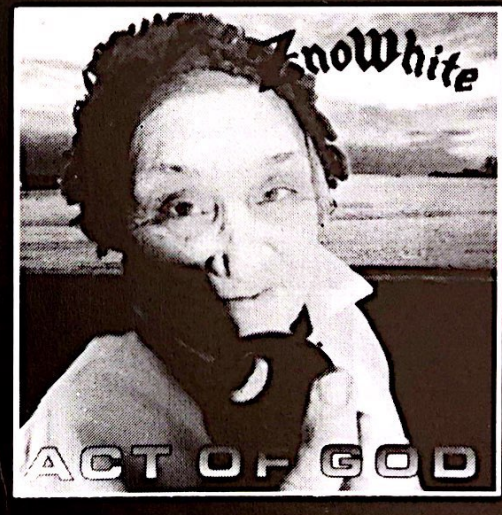

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